



RESEARCH PAPER 1/21

Embedding Laudato si' in Catholic Schools

Abstract

Reflections from Koinonia schools, as well as national and international best practice, that we can use in our settings. With thanks to all colleagues who contributed.

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What are *Koinonia* Research Papers?

- Short to medium weight papers, posters or other media [up to approximately 2500 words equivalence]
- Generated by *Koinonia* staff, curated and quality assured by the *Koinonia* Steering Group and shared with our strategic partner, the Centre for Catholic Education, Research and Religious Literacy, [CERRL], St Mary's University, Twickenham
- Designed to draw from best practice – locally, nationally and internationally
- Intended to produce easy-to-adopt, and adapt, punchy strategy on the ground, and generate debate more broadly. Also helpful in framing school self-evaluation questions, explaining approaches to Governors and Trustees and in in-house training

The *Koinonia* advantage

17 schools represents a good research base of friendly school leaders and staff: you might want to survey the 17 schools to improve your research – if so, let us know and we can make that happen.

Is this for 'academic' types?

Absolutely NOT. If you – whether a member of staff in a supportive role, or a teacher - are working on something that is having a measurable, sustained impact and improving the lives of children and staff, we want to hear from you!

How frequently will you receive an edition?

Approximately monthly, but maybe more frequently in this pre-launch period

Who can contribute

Any *Koinonia* member of staff, including colleagues at St Mary's, but we would particularly welcome at least one annual contribution from your 'Leading Practitioners', identified by you for showcasing on the Blog.

How to contribute

Email your document in an editable format [e.g. Word] to allow for formatting and editing to s.uttley@hughfaringdon.org

Koinonia Schools' Research paper 1/21

Unpacking *Laudato si'* for the school and the classroom

Simon Uttley

Laudato si [page numbers of CTS version in brackets]	Questions for self-evaluation	Practical suggestions
<p><i>Laudato si, mi signore – why the title?</i></p> <p><i>Praise be to you my Lord. A canticle of St Francis when reflecting on the world – like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who embraces us. [page 1]</i></p>	<p>How aware are our pupils of their environment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How aware are our [i] students [ii] our staff [iii] our Governors/Trustees of this, and other, Church documents that speak to the issues that often matter to children? • How do we ensure that the rich teaching of the Church is experienced within our schools? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures of Pope Francis showing his love for the environment • Picture of St Francis – love of the environment and animals • Use the title ‘<i>Laudato si</i>’ and translate it and explain it simply • Read <i>Laudato si</i> – it isn’t long and you can read it for free here Laudato si' (24 May 2015) Francis (vatican.va) • Cross-refer in school operational planning and self-evaluation
<p>‘we have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will’. [2]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our school reflect a care for the environment in terms of: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a ‘care promise’ – how we will take care and respect our school and our environment – signed by staff, Governors, pupils...10Resolutions ClimateAction Final (donbosco.org)

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	<p>[i] how it is managed?</p> <p>[ii] staff attitudes?</p> <p>[iii] student attitudes ?</p> <p>[iv] Governor and Trustee attitudes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in one of our schools, the children create a set of rules for others to follow on how to care for the creation and the earth • special events: One of our schools has ‘Forest Friday’ – with a focus on the environment, ensuring this is regular and embedded. • Think about how you can live <i>Laudato si’</i> as a family LSPledge-10ways-FAMILIES.pdf (livelaudatosi.org) • Within education, the Creation story is linked to the beauty and preciousness of what is created • ‘Eco Club’, ‘Eco Prefects’ transformed to ‘<i>Laudato</i> Club/Prefects’ to make the link • <i>Electricity Use Monitors</i> • Discouraging single-use plastics • Staff <i>Laudato si’</i> leaders; link Governor • One of our schools engages with webinars with Professors at Cop 26 Resources Topical Talk (economistfoundation.org) SCHOOLS PACK: GET INSPIRED - Together For Our Planet (ukcop26.org)

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rise theatre group presenting on God’s Planet • The Cafod Livesimply award CAFOD • Reflecting on the climate Climate reflections CAFOD
<p>Pope Paul VI, writing as far back as 1970 -inasmuch as there have been:</p> <p>‘the most extraordinary scientific advances, the most amazing technical abilities, the most astonishing economic growth, unless they are accompanied by authentic social and moral progress, will definitely turn against man’ [3]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how can technology, on its own, be a force for ‘bad’ as well as good in our school? • How is our school perceived as a neighbour to other people living nearby? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display Pope Paul VI quote, appropriately differentiated • Kindness to people and the environment closely linked: links to how social media can be bad as well as good [link with safe and responsible usage] • Inviting neighbours for coffee morning / visit the school / virtual ‘Open Day’ permanently on school website • What is the environmental impact of technology we, in school, use every day? Cars, IT, school boiler, electricity. Using dials and simple to understand charts showing how the school is reducing waste – approach our supplier and incorporate their green credentials into our ‘Eco Dashboard’ or equivalent. 8 tips for teaching primary school pupils about energy Tes EDF Energy
<p>Pope St John Paul II recognised that to promote environmental awareness it was not just enough to ‘care for the environment’ – it meant it was necessary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are students challenged to widen their care for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deep understanding of ‘care’ with examples [family, hospitals, school]

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<p>to ‘safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic human ecology’ [5]</p> <p>Pope Benedict said that creation is harmed ‘where we ourselves have the final word, where everything is simply our property and we use it for ourselves alone. The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognise any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves.’ [6]</p> <p>“the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone. If we make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good of all” [95]</p> <p>We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one, single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalisation of indifference. Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth</p>	<p>the environment by, not only better understanding what it is to ‘care’, but also the many other vulnerabilities there are in addition to the environment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we ask pupils/students what actually <i>matters</i> to them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • real-life examples from inside and outside school e.g. in one of our schools, pupils/students awarded a special badge for any sustained [3 months or more] leadership, volunteering [out of school], and service [within the school] [School Colours]. • explore ideas of unconditional love • in one of our schools the <i>What Matters to Me</i> survey, conducted every year with 20% of the pupil population, shows what really engages young people’s thoughts, hopes, dreams and concerns. One year it was homelessness that came out top and the focus on that year’s charitable work was, therefore, rough sleepers in Reading. • Introduce age-appropriate ideas of Catholic Social Teaching <p>General resources - Missio</p> <p>Catholic Social Teaching resources for children CAFOD</p> <p>The Rosary linked to care for creation Joyful Mysteries for Care of Creation.pdf (cafod.org.uk)</p> <p>Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching Handout: For Kids CRS</p>

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		<p>Preparing for Easter with the Emmaus Meal Prayer emmaus-meal booklet.pdf (cafod.org.uk)</p> <p>Dashboard - Laudato Si' Action Platform (laudatosiactionplatform.org) Pope Francis' official resource for schools</p>
<p>In this quest we need to take everyone with us – which means it cannot be party-political, nor can it be imposed [certainly not without every effort to bring people with us] [14]</p> <p>-it is impossible to separate ecological and green issues from how we feel about our own communities. Anything we do must “integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear <i>both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor</i>”. [49]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how are <i>all</i> members of the student community <i>encouraged</i> to see in care for the environment a service they can offer and a duty as part of a community? <p>-and the staff, too?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how are the poor and vulnerable in our society [and our community] particularly affected by a lack of love for our 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wide participation across and beyond the school [suggest – work with our 17 <i>Koinonia</i> schools is a prime example]. • different approaches e.g. addressing our throwaway culture [20-22] by writing letters to local Councillor/MP asking for recycling bins • a real focus on creative activities [e.g. art, dance, writing], emphasising the idea of ‘create’. • working with the Local Authority [inviting councillors] on the loss of biodiversity and its remedies at a local [urban] level as well as understanding the work of local farms, just a few miles away [32-42] • advice on choices of what to buy, especially at times of high consumption, such as Christmas

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	<p>environment and our common home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The refugee experience? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with The Local Authority to understand the impact on the climate and atmosphere, for example via local air quality testing units [perhaps ‘how clean is the air near my house?’] [23-26] Year 6/11/13 pupils and students working on a ‘Legacy Project’ that they will not be able to directly benefit from [‘consume’] but will benefit the upcoming generation of pupils and students [‘invest’]. [“The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.” [Nelson Henderson] Understanding the refugee experience [e.g. our role in welcoming Afghan people fleeing persecution] www.cafod.org.uk/climaterellections Pope Francis speaks to KS2 children on building a better world Fratelli Tutti animation CAFOD - YouTube
<p>Scriptural references</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the creation of man and woman, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.” (Genesis 1: 31) “The harmony between the creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a school, what is our three to five year site plan and how does it include a reverence for our environment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visualise / illustrate the love of God, neighbour and love of earth as the golden triangle To show that we cannot be unfair and unpleasant to others and say we care about the environment – equally, in our school, our faith underpins each person’s unique dignity

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<p>refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations.” [66]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that two different readings of genesis are possible, with very different results. <p>Reading 1 – as humans we ‘have dominion’ over the earth [Gen 1:28] so we can do what we want with it.</p> <p>This then is all about ‘me’ and ‘my needs’ and “a misguided anthropocentrism leads to a misguided lifestyle.... when human beings placed themselves at the centre, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience and all else becomes relative.” [122]</p> <p>Reading 2 - Genesis 2:15 people are called to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world, where tilling speaks of cultivating and working and keeping speaks of showing real care. And this care means recognising that we are passing tenants and have a responsibility to future generations : ‘The earth is the Lord’s’ [Ps 24:1] and to him belongs ‘ and ‘The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me’ [Leviticus 25:23]</p> <p>And ‘the Lord rejoices in all his works’ [Ps 104:31]</p> <p>And ““Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we ensure people’s dignity? How do we ensure <i>all our</i> management thinking is at least medium term [e.g. three to five year corporate strategy]? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of our school’s writes a three-year corporate strategy, spending six months bringing together the widest stakeholder engagement, including neighbours. Prayer Microsoft Word - CAFOD Prayers Livesimply.doc Promoting sharing, exchanging, recycling as against consumerism The school’s HR policies, enhanced into a ‘People’ strategy, starting with well-being at the centre School Garden – using the RHS Award for schools RHS School Gardening Awards / RHS Campaign for School Gardening

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<p>way array of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Men and women must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things." [Catechism of the Catholic Church, 339]</p>		
<p>An awareness of the environment is rooted in, supported by, and supportive of, a love of neighbour and the promotion of justice and peace. When this goes wrong [Cain and Abel, Noah...] the results are disastrous. [70]</p> <p>So, for example, we cannot be concerned with trafficking of rare species without being [pre-eminently] also concerned with the trafficking of people. [91] "human beings cannot be expected to feel responsibility for the world unless, at the same time, their unique capacities of knowledge, will, freedom and responsibility are recognised and valued." [118]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we funnel the very real concern with the environment into a renewed concern for 'neighbour'? At the student/pupil level, but also as a school working in a neighbourly manner? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil / student service expanded even further. One of our schools celebrates • As a Catholic school, we may seek to establish ecological virtues, whilst always recognising that these must subsist within the greater virtues derived from a belief in, and relationship with, God. This is an example, and could be adapted for younger children: The nine ecological virtues Earthbeat National Catholic Reporter (ncronline.org)
<p>The environment works according to natural rhythms [growth, hibernation etc] and the Jewish people, respecting the Sabbath, recognised how this teaches us to do the same. Proper time to rest and reflect. [71]</p> <p>The idea of creation is more than nature – it is recognising a plan, and goals, for each of us and how these goals will be achieved interdependently, not independently [77].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does our school give enough time for celebration? • Do our staff enjoy an appropriate work-life balance? • Do we teach our students how to relax and reflect? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload reduction work for staff Reducing school workload - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) • One of our school's undertakes an annual Lectio Divina/prayer/retreat programme for students [and staff]

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<p>“God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only independent on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.” [Catechism of the Catholic Church, 340].</p>	<p>Do we instil an understanding of creation based not only for the world around us [natura and man-made] but also for each person, achieving her ends?</p> <p>How do we ensure due regard for STEM subjects goes hand in hand with developing creative capacities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating the values of Interdependence e.g. how subjects rely on each other [e.g. PE relying on science; maths relying on English] • Encouraging all students to engage in creative activities, irrespective of curriculum pathway [in secondary phase]. • Include the school garden in the thinking as a symbol and a reality of ‘<i>Laudato Si</i>’
<p>We have privileged ‘mastery’ – getting hold of things and making them/using them/consuming them as our own [106].</p> <p>‘The fragmentation of knowledge proves helpful for concrete applications, and yet it often leads to a loss of appreciation for the whole, for the relationships between things, and for the broader horizon, which then becomes irrelevant.’ [110]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does our idea of teach-learn-reproduce-become qualified lead to a dry sense of learning as consumption and regurgitation? <p>One based on ‘been there, done that’?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interdependence between subjects e.g. literature, science, history, geography and RE • One of our school’s identifies the passions and pastimes of the staff and turns this into their individual poster, showing how diverse interests have a shared core – this <i>matters</i> to me • One school asks each member of staff [teachers, support staff, catering staff/...] to reflect on <i>The</i>

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<p>Pope Francis calls the focus on technology being the answer to everything – which he fervently believes not to be the case – the ‘technocratic paradigm’. [109]</p> <p>This includes the world of work where technology can strip away jobs and the dignity of work: ‘In order to continue providing employment, it is imperative to promote an economy which favours product diversity and business creativity”</p> <p>This can extend to how we teach and learn</p> <p>[I have written about this – please see <i>Heidegger in Lockdown – from ‘mastery’ to ‘disclosure’</i> here https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/areas/education-and-teaching/reflected/blog/latest.aspx</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we celebrate jobs and vocations, through careers education, which contribute to the common good e.g teacher, clergy, nurse, social worker...? 	<p><i>most important lesson I ever learnt</i> and share it with children, via posters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More systematic ‘alumni association’ [secondary] showcasing what our ex-students are doing now and how they are making a positive difference

Prayer

Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord, All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour and all blessings.

To you alone, Most High, do they belong, and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your Name.

Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who is the day through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour,
Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
In the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all weather's moods,
by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water,
So useful, humble, precious and pure.

Praised be You my Lord through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You my Lord through our Sister,
Mother Earth
who sustains and governs us,
producing varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.
Praise be You my Lord through those who grant pardon for love of You and bear sickness and trial.

Blessed are those who endure in peace, By You Most High, they will be crowned.

